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HARD TIMES FOR SIX YEARS.

Unpleasant Prophecy Made by an Ohio Man.

Philadelphia Record.

In the present depressed condition of the iron and steel trade it will afford interesting reading to peruse the prophecies made by Samuel Benner, an Ohio farmer, which were published in book form in 1870. When the first book appeared it created quite a stir in the commercial world. Many people did not hesitate to say that it was the work of a disordered brain; but, considered in the light of past events, many noted authorities on the iron and steel industaies have come to regard Mr. Benner's predictions with more attention.

Mr. James M. Swank, secretary of the American Iron and Steel Association, remarked yesterday: "Though Benner has in the past years been subjected to much ridicule, there is no use in shutting our eyes to the fact that in his prophecies he manages to strike some things pretty well, as may be illustrated by a glance at the prices of iron during recent years. However, it was nothing more than guesswork, as he only succeeded in fortelling things the same as Vennor does the weather."

Mr. Benner claims that "the iron trade is the chief and ruling industry of this country, if not in the world." Continuing, he says: "Iron is the most useful of metals. As the iron industry raises or falls in the scale of prosperity so does the general business of the country. Pig-iron is our north star to guide us over the dangerous roads of commerce. It is the barometer of trade, and as the sudden falling of the mercury denotes violent changes in the atmospherical world, so does the periodical decline in the price of pig-iron indicate panic, depression and a general stagnation of business."

Mr. Benner claims to have been guided in foretelling the future by judging from the past. "These prophecies," says the author, "are not upon supposed fanciful speculation, but from the testimony of twenty years' observation from living and experienced facts; from the yeraly average prices, compiled by recognized official authority, and by analogy, relying upon history to repeat itself." In short, Mr. Benner claims that trade has cycles.

The writer presents a scale showing the prices of pig-iron from 1834 to the present time, in order, as he says, "to enable the reader to better understand the different cycles in high and low prices and the order in which they return." It is shown by this scale the price of pig-iron advanced from 1834 to 1837; descended from 1837 to 1843; then advanced until 1845; then descended until 1850; then advanced until 1854; then descended until 1861; then advanced until 1864; then descended until 1870; then advanced until 1872, and then descended until 1877. As the book was written in 1875, his future predictions began in 1876. He declared that the price of pig-iron would continue to fall until 1877, when it would take an upward turn and continue until 1881, when it would again descend until 1888. He observes that the price advances and declines in a decreasing series of arithmetical progression, the advances in the order of three, two and four years and repeat, and the declines in the order of six, five and seven and repeat. His predictions from 1876 to the present have been verified in many respects, especially the years named as the turning points in the price.

Benner makes the unpleasant prediction that from now until 1888 hard times will ensue. This disagreeable prophecy is worded as follows:

"The years 1882, '83, '84, '85, '86, '87, '88 will be years of decline in the price of pig iron and years of depression in this business. These seven years of decline will be a repetition of the seven years from 1854 to 1861. We have had but one of these seven year declines since 1834, and it would be to the benefit of this country if we never had another; however, the writer is compelled by the rule of cycles to point it out in the future and warn the iron trade of this impending danger. And we proclaim it to all to be prepared after the year 1881 for breakers ahead. In the repetition of these seven years of decline, which these cycles surely indicate, every furnace in this country will be slaughtered unless backed by large capital and ability to stand great loss or hold their own, stop their furnaces, husband resources and wait for better times. These declines will not encounter a general panic, as did the former seven-year declines in the panic of 1857, or the five-year declines in the panic of 1873, and therefore they will be more gradual."

In the minds of some this unwelcome prediction is given all the more weight when it is recalled how well Mr. Benner foretold the state of the trade during the past four years. Of this period he wrote: "In the years 1878, 1879, 1880 and 1881 the price of pig iron will be in the ascending scale, the iron trade will again be prosperous, and in these years—especially the last two, 1880 and 1881—money will be made very fast, unless trammeled by unwise legislation upon the currency and tariff."

In another portion of the book the author has this to say of the next six years: "However, in the year 1882, and the six succeeding years, running to 1888, like the years after 1854 and 1864, we may look for squalls in the money market, blue Mondays, black Fridays and tornadoes in banking." But Benner bids all hands to look with delight at the approach of 1888." After this year," he says, "price of pig iron will advance, all business will be prosperous, corn and hogs will be in the advance, agriculture and manufacture will be active, all trades and industries will make money up to the year 1891, when I predict a panic which will not be confined to the United States or this continent, but will sweep over the world like the panics of 1819 and 1857, and will be felt with equal severity in other countries."

Mr. Benner avers that he is justified in making the foregoing prophecies, and uses this argument to assert the truth of his claim: "The writer claims that his showing of past prices in pig-iron, the cycles between high and low-priced years and their periodical return, has a legitimate bearing upon the future that no one can gainsay and no human knowledge can contradict; the predictions are based on sound analogy; their fulfillment is demonstrated to a certainty, and that time will surely verify the prophecies. The changes in the ups and downs in prices and cycles in the iron trade are periodical and not hap-hazard, and succeed eachother in a gradual and natural order. Verily, the handwriting is upon the wall, and so plain it needs no magi to decipher what it means."

Scobeleff's Test of the Sentry.

Fortnightly Review.

As a disciplinarian he was firm and strict. No point was too minute to be overlooked. Scobeleff's vindettes were never caught napping. His knowledge of the detail of military duty was universal—even to sounding all the bugle calls. An illustration of the discipline of his corps occurs to me. I had been talking with him of military breech-loaders and discussing the merits of various systems. Taking a "Berdan" with which the troops were latterly armed, from a soldier, he undid the breech and lock and explained the mechanism with the precision of a gunsmith. Returning the rifle to the soldier, he turned, walking up to a sentry a few paces distant, he said: "Let me see your rifle"—extending his hand as he spoke. The man saluted, and replied: "I can not, Your Excellency." "But I want to see if it is clean," persisted the general. "I can not, Your Excellency," again said the sentry, as firm as a rock. Scobeleff smiled, pulled his ears, and walked on. I asked an explanation, whereupon he said that a rule of war with him was that no sentry on duty was on any account to give up possession of his arms—not even to the czar himself. "But," said I, "suppose the sentry had given up his rifle when you were seemingly so serious in asking for it. What, then?" "He would have been shot," quietly replied the general, "for disobedience to orders in times of war."

—God does not delay to hear our prayers because he has no mind to give; but that, by enlarging our desires, He may give us more largely.—*Austin.*

A Castle in the Clouds.

Buffalo Commercial-Advertiser.

There is at present, and has been for several months, an inmate of the Willard Insane Asylum at Ovid, this state, a Danish lady of good education, and who, previous to the loss of her reason, occupied a respectable position in society. Her delusion is that she is immensely wealthy—the queen of the universe. In some way unknown to the managers of the asylum this unfortunate woman some weeks ago succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the attendants and mailed a letter to her brother in Denmark. The letter stated that she had been very fortunate since being in this country, that she had become wealthy and was living in a magnificent mansion constructed by herself, that she had plenty of means to provide for himself and family, and closed by urging him to accept her hospitality and spend the remainder of his days with her. There was nothing in the letter to excite suspicion or cause the brother to distrust her statement, except as to her great wealth. But he had heard of the good luck of so many of his countrymen in this land of plenty that he did not know but fortune had favored his sister, and that she, too, had got rich.

He closed his business (he was a tailor), and with his five children sailed for America. Early this week the little group arrived at Geneva and hastened their steps toward Ovid. On arriving there they at once recognized Willard from the description given in the letter as the sister's mansion. At the asylum office "the lady of the house" was inquired for, but not being able to explain the situation and nobody present being able to talk Danish the asylum people were in a quandary to know what to do. Finally an old Dane was found among the attendants. The true state of affairs was then made known, both to the managers and to the unfortunate emigrants, whose cruel disappointment was really pitiable to behold. Instead of finding a wealthy sister with outstretched arms ready to welcome them to her palatial abode, they found her the inmate of an insane asylum and in a hopeless condition, while they were left among strangers without a penny.

Advice to a Discouraged Lover.

Laramie Boomerang.

She may be giddy, but she has just about sized you up in shape, and no doubt if you keep on trying to love her without her knowledge or consent she will hit you with something and put a Swiss sunset over your eye. Do not yearn to win her affections all at once. Give her twenty or thirty years in which to see your merits. You will have more to entitle you to her respect by that time, no doubt. During that time you may rise to be president and win a deathless name.

The main thing you have to look out for now, however, is to restrain yourself from marrying people who do not want to marry you. That style of freshness will, in thirty or forty years, wear away. If it does not, probably the vigorous big brother of some "young lady of 17" will consign you to the silent tomb. Do not try to promenade with a young lady unless she gives her consent. Do not marry one against her wishes. Give the girl a chance. She will appreciate it; and, even though she may not marry you, she will permit you to sit on the fence and watch her when she goes to marry some one else. Do not be despondent. Be couragous, and some day perhaps you will get there. At present the horizon is a little bit foggy.

As you say, she may be so giddy that she doesn't want steady company. There is a glimmer of hope in that. She may be waiting till she gets over the agony and annoyance of teething before she looks seriously into the matters of matrimony. If that should turn out to be the case we are not surprised. Give her a chance to grow up, and in the meantime go and learn the organ grinder's profession, and fix yourself so that you can provide for a family. Sometimes a girl only seventeen years old is able to discern that a young intellectual giant like you is not going to make a dazzling succes of life as a hushand. Brace up and try to forget your sorrows and you may be happy yet.

—Time began with the production of those things that are measured by time.

A Generous Grocer.

Texas Siftings.

The family had recently moved into the suburbs of Austin from the wilds of Arkansaw. The head of the family, who was a tall, thin man, afflicted with red hair and the Arkansaw dialect, went over to the nearest corner grocery to lay in a supply of family provisions.

"What are you quoting condensed milk at per whole can?" asked the stranger, reaching down with one of his paws and lifting a quart of cranberries, which he chucked one by one, into his open mouth during the pauses in the conversation.

"Twenty-five cents," replied the grocer, putting a washboard over the top of the cranberry barrel.

"Whew! The price hasn't been condensed much. Gimme half a can for a dime. I suppose you will throw in a piece of soap as an inducement," and the gentleman from Arkansaw took a handful of brown sugar to mitigate the acidity of the cranberries.

"Don't sell half a can of milk. Besides if I did let you have half a can, what would you put it in?" growled the grocer, looking savage, as he clapped the cover on the sugar barrel.

"Put it in? I'd take my half in the can, of course. You could pour your half of the milk into one of those new tubs, or into a bottle. That's your lookout," and the stranger absentmindedly cut off a generous slice of cheese, and reached into the cracker barrel. The grocer covered up the crackers, fondled the cheese knife in a very significant manner, and said with a sneering smile, referring probably to the crackers, cheese, sugar, and cranberries:

"You lay in a great deal of provisions in the course of a year, don't you?"

"I should say so. I expect to drop a mint of money in this town of Austin. We will just have to have a new frying pan before spring. As soon as my oldest boy is seventeen—he only lacks two years of it right now—he will want a box of blacking, and perhaps a paper collar, and his mother is talking about a cravat. Our box of matches is not going to last, the way they are going now, more than a few months longer. I only got that box of matches at Little Rock last Fourth of July. Our coffee pot can't last forever, and I'll have to have to invest in a new one. I should think you would throw whole cans of condensed milk at me for the chance to tap all that trade," and reaching over, he endeavored to extricate a piece of tobacco from the box, remarking once more: "I should think you would give me a can of condensed milk just to allure me——." He didn't finish, for the grocer, who had been getting madder and madder, actually did give him a can of condensed milk, but he didn't wrap it up for him, and tie it with a string, and ask him, "What else?" but he gave it to him in an off hand careless sort of way, just behind the ear. The generous grocer then jumped over the counter to secure the trade of the stranger by giving him an ax-handle, but the stranger, without waiting for further inducements, made another dive at the cranberries, and passed out like a beautiful dream.

An Equestrienne's Death.

Detroit Free Press.

Our readers have heard of Miss Pinneo, of Greeley, Col., the graceful and enduring lady equestrienne, whom so many thousands have applauded as she rode her fifty-mile races. Some time since she married one Baxter, a saloon keeper at Topeka, Kas., and lately took a dose of poison and died. Her life appears to have been a sad one. She did not like the business of riding horses in trials of speed and endurance, and often sought to escape such severe tasks. The report is, and it is generally credited, that she rode races to obtain the money to pay debts or make up losses incurred by her father and brother in gambling, and that the trouble which became a part of her life so weighed her down that she sought rest in the other world.

For his discoveries in Africa M. S. de Brazza has been awarded a medal worth nearly $600 by the Municipal Council of Paris, but the efforts of this explorer have been mainly of late in the direction of what may be termed diplomatic commercial arrangements rather than purely scientific research.